

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 665 – LICENSURE OF ATHLETIC TRAINERS

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I SUPPORT THIS BILL FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. This bill allows Certified Athletic Trainers (ATCs) to treat athletes (not the general public) that participate in sports or games of the type conducted in association with an educational institution or a professional, amateur, or recreational sports club or organization;
2. This bill's scope of practice appropriately reflects the education ATCs receive in Montana;
3. Licensure is needed to keep totally untrained individuals from reconditioning athletes;
4. The Montana AT organization, and the Montana Physical Therapy Association have worked long and hard on a compromise that is reflected in this bill.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q: Does this bill allow ATs to treat the general public?

Answer: No. This bill clearly identifies that ATs can treat athletic injuries suffered by an athlete that participates in sports or games of the type conducted in association with an educational institution or a professional, amateur, or recreational sports club or organization.

Q: Does this bill allow ATs to treat worker's compensation patients?

Answer: No. Athletic Trainers are not recognized in the Worker's Compensation statute [39-71-704 (4), MCA], or the regulations [MAR 24.29.1532]. If a professional athlete were injured on-the-job, Athletic Trainers would be qualified to treat them. However, most traditional workers compensation injuries (back injuries, shoulder injuries, knee injuries) are outside the scope of an AT education.

Q: Does this bill allow ATs to treat Medicare patients?

Answer: No. First, Medicare has clearly stated in their "incident to" rule that rehabilitation treatments must be provided by a physical therapist, occupational therapist, physician, nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, or a physician assistant. Specifically, Medicare will not reimburse for treatments provided by an Athletic Trainer. Second, most Athletic Trainers have a bachelor's degree. Medicare no longer issues new identification numbers to physical therapists with a bachelor's degree, so it would be inconsistent to allow an Athletic Trainer with a bachelor's degree to participate in the Medicare program. Third, while Athletic Trainers are qualified to treat competitive athletes, they are not trained to treat geriatrics, or patients with chronic illnesses such as osteoporosis, diabetes, or heart disease (which makes up a large portion of the Medicare population).